Common Phrasal Verbs

Here is a list of common phrasal verbs.

Account for

This is an inseparable phrasal verb.

To account for something is to give a reason or explanation for it.

- How will you account for the money you spent on that fancy dress?
- How do you account for the sudden improvement in your grades?
- The student was brought before the principal to account for his behavior.
- Exports account for nearly 60% of our revenue.

Act out

To act out is to express your feelings through your words or actions.

- She was acting out her feelings of insecurity by being overly possessive.

Act up

When children act up, they behave badly. When machines act up, they fail to work properly.

- My kids act up whenever we have guests.
- The car is acting up again.

Add in

To add in something is to include it.

- If you add in the information about his family background, you will understand why he behaves so strangely.

Add up

When something adds up it makes sense.

- Your arguments just don’t add up.
- There is something about his behavior that just doesn’t add up.

To add up is to calculate the total.

- Add up those numbers.

Allow for

To allow for something is to take it into consideration.

- The survey does not allow for the fact that many students drop out of school before they turn fourteen.

Answer back

To answer back is to reply rudely.

- Her children are very badly brought up. They answer back all the time.

Answer for

To answer for something is to take responsibility for something you have done.

- You will have to answer for your actions.

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